

FIVE IMPORTANT  
QUERIES  
Humbly Propounded  
To all true Lovers of the Peace and Safety  
OF THE  
CHURCH  
AND  
STATE.

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By a sincere Well-wisher to the  
Old *Protestant* Religion.

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*Voluit Lapis nunquam capit Muscum.*  
Often Changes presume Death at hand.

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L O N D O N :

Printed by Nathaniel Thompson next Dore to the Cross  
Keys in Fetter-Lane, MDCLXXXI.

II  
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QUESTIONS

Humbly Proposed

To all true Lovers of the Peace and Safety

OF THE

CHURCH

ST. E.



By a sincere Well-wisher to the  
Old Protestant Religion

Written by a Person of great Learning

Often Censured for his Boldness in his

LONDON

Printed by Nathaniel Thompson next Door to the Cross  
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## FIVE IMPORTANT

## QUERIES

Humbly Propounded

To all true Lovers of the Peace and Safety of the  
CHURCH and STATE.

**W**Hether it be *necessary* to endeavour any Alteration in the Church, in this Juncture of Affairs, considering, 1. There is nothing practis'd in it contrary to any known Commandments of God: 2. Nor can its bitterest Adversaries affirm, that its Communion hinders the salvation of mens souls: 3. Nor doth its continuance cross the Laws of the Land (as the practice of all other Sects do) since 'tis established by the Law: 4. Nor is there any evil at present, or greater danger, then hath been for some years last past, from the parties of either side, to halten such alteration: 5. But such alteration may soon move Asperities of either side, great enough to endanger the State.

II. Whether it be *profitable* to endeavour such Alteration, considering, 1. The parties are of both sides as much engaged against the *Papists*, at present, as ever they will be in their Union. 2. The fiercest and rigidest of the Sects can never unite, but by utter destruction of the Church: For the *Quakers* deny all Sacraments, and can't mix with them that are for them, since they are matter of daily and personal practice. The *Anabaptists* cannot close, for then *England* must be all un-Churched and un-Christianed; or they must forsake their principles. Nor can the *Independents*; for they profess none can be a Church of Christ, but what are gathered by their own consent, and make an explicate Covenant, and exercise all jurisdiction in a single Congregation, which is inconsistent

with the Constitution of this Church. 3. The *Presbyterians*, as they are few in number, (if any) so can they not assure the Law-alterers, to bring any of their people to our Communion, after all pretended alterations made. 1. Because they are bred up in a perfect aversion from Liturgies. 2. Because they are too proud to head themselves with the vulgar. 3. They love to seem more Religious than their Neighbours. 4. They hold Gods people to be a little Flock separated from the world; and conclude they must have a world to rail at, and distinguish themselves from, tho' it be from Christians baptized, and professing the true Faith; and that they cannot go with the multitude of believers, but to do evil; and must contend with Magistracy, that through many tribulations they may enter into the Kingdom of God; and so ungovernable, that their own Teachers affirm they can't rule them. So that it were prudence in Law-makers to take a List of their Names, subscribed by themselves, that would unite upon such abatements, lest they should toyl all day and get nothing. 4. 'Tis certain when *Presbytery* was nigh establishing in 1645 without Ceremonies or Liturgies, the Dissenters swarmed; and armed against them as fast as now, and found occasions enough of disputing and separating. Nor is there at present any Liturgy or Ceremony in the Church of *Scotland*, but the Field-Conventioniers, and the Regular Clergy, pray and preach without distinction, in the same method; yet is the separation strenuously kept up upon other grounds, when Liturgy and Ceremonies were taken away. So that the profit of alteration is not like to quit the cost; besides the offence it may give to the serious Conformist, who should not be valued the less for being tender of disobedience to Authority. And 5. 'Tis most unreasonable to hope, when the Law is relaxed to male contents, that conquest over the Laws should make them more humble or peaceable, for it will seem to them a victory over King, Lords and Commons, to make them more insolent.

III. Whether it be *expedient* at this time to attempt such Alteration, considering, 'twas but 18 years since the Churches  
last

last Settlement, and the same men for the most part are still in the Legislation, who either acted then with mature consideration, or not: if they did, what accident since should make them attempt a change? Are there more Sectaries than at that time? or fewer Conformists? or is the Liturgy and Ceremonies grown worse than they were? or the Dissenters more peaceable and humble? or is there greater danger in continuing, than there was in first settling the Church? But if not done with due conscience and regard, it is a sad reproach to the Legislators, nor can they secure us that greater care will be taken now, since they implicitly confess they prevaricated before: besides the dishonour will reflect on the King of Levity and Inconstancy in the great Affairs of Religion, to alter its Modes faster than Fashions. 2. Such Alterations will cast a blur on the Reformation, and disturb the ashes of our pious Martyrs, as men that settled a Religion and sealed it with their blood, which a good conscience could not comply withal. 3. It will justify the *Papists* in their sufferings, and condemn our whole Laws and National Justice; that we should punish them so many years for not coming to Church, and complying with a Religion that now our selves think fit to be exploded; and the parties to be gratified, declare; that no man with a good conscience can comply withal; a greater wound than which cannot be given to the whole *English Nation*; nor a fairer palm of victory to the *Papists*, (thus made) Martyrs or Confessors at the least, and so on. 4. And if we do not believe that it will be of very small consequence to all sorts: For when Scurplers shall find they can master Laws, and get their will over Authority, it will encourage and increase scrupling; yea even to the ruine of them that are now to be gratified, for others by their example will hope to rise by the same evil Arts. 2. And for the common people, it will take off their reverence to Religion, by seeing it represented so trifling, light and changeable; and so will tempt them to believe there is no God, by reason of the Tricks and Experiments the State makes with his worship; nor will they much value at any time what they



they see kickt about like a Foot-ball, and will think any Settlement will be in fashion but for a few years, and then ob-  
 reckon it evil and ridiculous. 3. Yea, the wisest and best of  
 men will stumble, when they see the way of Religion, in  
 which they have for many years comfortably worshipt God,  
 now at last in a hurry thrust out of the world by prevailing  
 Faction. 4. The *Roman* Faction make all the profit; for that  
 mighty Argument that hath perverted thousands already will  
 now be stronger, That there is no Settlement, union or peace  
 any where but in the *Roman* Church, nor any steady Religion  
 else to place themselves under, seeing us so in trouble our  
 Worship from one mode to another, as the Tumblers, when the  
 pollures; thus we take pains to drive Fish into the Popes Net.  
 Besides which, it will wonderfully harden and encourage the  
*Papists*, when they shall see us not only to affect their Errors,  
 Novellies and Superstitions, but even the same usages of the  
 Primitive Church: so that they will conclude we walk by no  
 Rule but our own wills, and are Nonconformists not only to  
 their Church, but to all since Christianity begun in the world.  
 Yes, when our people shall see Parliaments so apt to change  
 the shapes of our Worship, they will suspect that when occa-  
 sion serves, they will bring up the old *Roman* mode, as they  
 did in the first year of *Queen Mary*, which may tempt the  
 people to prepare themselves for it against the time. *Viz.* 1600.  
 IV. Whether it be *lawful* for Parliaments so often, and  
 without being called on by the Church Representatives, to at-  
 tempt those Alterations, considering, 1. The Laws of God  
 condemn such as are given to change, and all that are busi-  
 bodies in other mens Matters, and require submission in all  
 lawful things, with meekness and lowliness of mind, the Spirit  
 directing Christians to give themselves up to the Lord, and  
 then to the guidance of the Church, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. By the will of  
 God, whose faith the Saints were bound to follow, *Heb.* 13. 7.  
 and not to meddle with doubtful disputations, *Rom.* 14. 1.  
 and much less to attempt perpetual Alterations. 2. The Law  
 of Nature made all the Ceremonies of Religion unalterable  
 unless

unless on very great occasion, as may be seen in all Mythologists. 3. Right Reason assures us that what we do without just cause, we have some unjust cause for it, as prejudice, partiality, passion, or the like. 4. The Law of the Land forbids it, while the great Charter secures the Church all its privileges, one of which was to be first and chief in all Matters of Religion; and what alterations were made, did owe their rise to them, the secular Power followed their Decrees with the civil Sanction. 5. It looks very odd, that at every Election of a new Parliament, we should put our Bodies and Souls, Religion and Worship, as well as Liberty and Property, into the hands of our Representatives, whom we choose on the Kings Writ, to be as Arbitrators for us in those things, that the King at that time hath to propound; *England* rather takes Parliaments for a Civil then Spiritual Court. How would a good Conscience tremble when a Parliament sits down, to think that now the Worship of God is in danger to be blasted by a major Vote? The Ark of God would totter at every such Assembly.

V. Lastly, Whether it be *fair dealing* to attempt such Alterations, considering, 1. That the Body of the people of all ranks and degrees cheerfully complied with the Settlement, in hope to live peaceably all their days under it, and to be no longer distracted with endless divisions, but to rest themselves here as in the true Ark of God: But such Alterations thrust them into the Floods again, and charge them as men of no Conscience, for embracing that way of Worship, that is now thought fit for nothing but the dunghill; and send them to seek some new Assemblies to march along with to Heaven, in the midst of infinite distractions, and exposes them to the scorn of Dissenters, that will deride their Christian humility for base and cowardly compliance, &c. a sad requital for their holy and humble demeanour. 2. The Clergy whose Conformity will seem their scandal, and their many Declarations and Subscriptions, be accounted but as so many unconscionable ownings of a way of Worship, not fit to be endured by Christians.

arians. And the most stubborn and rebellious Schismatic be judged the better man, yet their meekness, obedience, and peaceable behaviour, will be reckoned base compliances with false ways of Worship, while the pride and stubbornness of the Sectary will pass for Christian fortitude, the injustice of which will haply be equal'd by nothing but the sentence of *Pilate* upon our Saviour.

Now for a Conclusion, we may Query, Whether it would not turn much more to the advantage of Piety and Peace, that each Bishop be urged to reside at his Cathedral, and attend his Consistory, that all Causes may be decided with greater justice, and the Censures of Church be managed with just and holy hands: And in case of necessary absence, that the Dean, and 4 or 3 at least of the gravest Prebends, as Co-adjutors, supply his place, that Righteousness may run down like water, and Judgment like a mighty stream, to refresh the Church of God, and bring it to its due and true Reverence; which being a way of Christs Institution, is more likely to recover straying Sheep, then all annihilation of Laws to unite them in I know not what ill-tempered Syncretism. Nor can such Bishop want judicious and acceptable *Presbyters*, to lend amongst the Dissenters, to convert them from their Errors, and to convince them of the dangerous estate of Schism, in which they stand, if industriously prosecuted. By this means chiefly the ancient Schisms were demolished, and Peace and Unity restored to the Church; but never by cassating the Laws, to make the Malefactors behaviour not illegal, whilst he continues in his stubbornness without repentance or amendment, the secular arm will inflict some small penalty, that men may not sin out of wantonness.

This is written plainly to all Capacities, and sincerely, designing to prevent those horrid Mischiefs, that will attend these designed Alterations, whenever they are made. God grant such a judgment to be made of it by our Rulers, as the Matter deserves.

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